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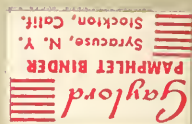


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THE BATTLE FIENDS

By E. H. VISIAK

ELKIN MATHEWS
CORK STREET · LONDON

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The Battle Fiends

WORKS BY E. H. VISIAK

BUCCANEER BALLADS

THE HAUNTED ISLAND

(A Pirate Romance)

FLINTS AND FLASHES

THE PHANTOM SHIP

THE WAR OF THE SCHOOLS

(A Suburban School Tale
In Collab. with C. V. Hawkins)

THE BATTLE FIENDS

By ^{Edward Harold} E. H. VISIAK
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ELKIN MATHEWS
CORK STREET · LONDON

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TO MY MOTHER

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The Battle Fiends

THE tides of time run low ; and terrors past
Return to plague us. Phantom idols rear,
And devil-gods, which set the world to dream,
And resurrect old nations : fearful fields
Deliver 'neath the moon, and procreate
In livid dread. I saw, though terror veiled,
And horror overcast them, images
As grisly sculptures wrought in thunder-dark
And baseless promont'ries, which merged and
changed
To shapes inhuman, meagre-shrunk, declined
To crooked shadows, thronged in shrouded halls
And labyrinths of darkness shuddering
With hollow sound, that rumbled null, and ceased.
Dread fell the summons of the Battle Fiend :

“ Pow'rs and dominions, deities of hell,
Our policy of war doth as a wheel
Turn ruthless, lest we lose control, and yield
Dominion, yield our strength and sustenance,

Our tribute from the blind that lead the blind
By crooked tongues that flicker in the jaws
Of our dark advocates, the rest unheard,
In strait tribunal censored, neutral thought
Embargoed, mercy contraband, the sun
Proclaimed ! The guarded patriot fury melts
The flintiest lies as honey in the mouths !
It is the great Evangel, and hath lit
Undreamt braseroes, startling envious hell !
And soon shall empty hell : we shall not stay,
Being bidden to the banquet, fasting here
In haughty hunger, in the jaded halls
Of hell's old aristocracy, but deign
Most graciously our festal patronage !
We'll carve the blood-streamed world, and sop the
 pain
Of steaming oceans, stir the settled lees,
And, where the green-pale dome, with finny flash,
Gleams in the sun-glare, mix the bottom, break
The drear enchantment of that icy brain
Which dreams in dateless darkness, and divulge
Primeval terrors, images of hate,
Man's proper element ; for out of hate
He came, and unto hatred shall return
By myriads, to the banquet rounded in,
Our cattle for the cannon-roast, befooled
To common slaughter in the bond of strife,
And common championship of liberty !

A riddle for ye rhymed : *What's that can be
Both one and many ? Championed liberty !*
Such canting knaves, our dupes, so credulous
Their dupes are, well may't move our laughter. Lo !
On every side : the fatted oxen first ;
The dogs and foxes follow, barking hoarse,
The females and the hooded kine-herds last.
We are well served by women and by priests :
These o'er the senses weave their silken spell ;
Those in the turmoil of the conscience pour
Confounding venom, love and hate confuse,
And murder justify. They dare oppose
Satan to Satan ! which impertinence,
Their work done, we shall visit on their heads.
But now (as custom is) to justify
Hostilities. Piratic commerce gapes
In every nation, threatening the rest,
His traffickers, extorts the uttermost
Of toil and pain ; but pain would foil our arm,
Kept we no watch. For pain doth ever drive
T'wards liberty, and labour's haggard eye
Discerns the narrow channel. All at once,
The pent volcanoes of the covered deep,
The cauldron of our policy, shall belch
Black fire and horror, blast the main, and choke
The staring ocean ! Vain His doctrine then,
Above the power of darkling violence
To federate with unresisting light !

Which, after Him, the toiling Russian saw,
Whom we beset, but ne'er from his crank hand
Could wrest his crazy lantern. Still it shines,
In darkness—and the darkness comprehends
There was a clown, the old, bald pacifist !
There was a butt for irony to grind
His steely eyes ! And men, who comprehend
The darkness, still shall comprehend our will :
To love their enemies, their torturers,
To worship the Imperial Deities,
To whet their blades by every breath of ill,
To suffer all things for the Jealous Gods,
Forgive all things, believe all things, to strike
At bodiless oppressions, evil shades,
And Protean illusions, raging on
O'er many a red morass and fen of death ;
Where those undying worms of war shall delve,
And charnel rivers sulphureously purge
The tettered veins and tissues fertilised
With death's encumbrances, fit soil to plant
Our fragrant garden in the grisly world !
Evil shall bloom there, baleful blossoms gleam
In baleful arbours luminous with death.
There, in the cool of carnage, after feast
On mortal pangs voluptuous, we shall breathe
Ambrosial odours, while the withered moon
Leans o'er the death-rack ghastly, while the stars
Steel blinking forth, and, scarlet in the pools,

Stain their reflections, 'neath the wintry gleam
Of women's desolation dim outstretched
In aching distance ! Rachel for her sons
Shall tune her hollow, sweet, string'd instrument
(So high to breaking wrought !), and, all night long,
Melodious raptures wake in our waned hearts,
Or give us dream, until the leering sun
With bloody, wheeling daggers smite in twain
Both harp and voice ! Such dear delights, and more,
In this great engine. Nay, this iron arm
Is tortured in the strained thews to hold
The tugging leash of fortune ! Hearken now !
From hell's toothed cliffs, a hollow sobbing swells
In moanings muffled as the voice of pain
For outcry too desperant, pent and dumb
With inward concentration ! Comrades, come !
The earth-heart calls us, beating as a drum !”

He ended ; and the halls of darkness roared
With monstrous passion, rolling as a sea
In coiling surges, hissing pitchy fire.
Coiling, uncoiling, slipping, sliding, sunk
In formless horror, gripping in the deep
With shadowy dissolution, they with pangs
Renewed their fiendish being. He, upraised
As on a ghastly pinnacle, was shrunk,
A point of spirit in a shadowy rim,
Premeditating his dark strategy.

The Shipwreck

SHE lies in primal darkness crushed and frore,
Ground in the mill of the ocean's threshing-floor ;
And monstrous fish, with phosphorescent eyes,
Explore a ruined city fallen from the skies.

On an Old Battle Field

WHERE the scarlet poppies bleed,
Where the round pods swell,
Deep was sown the dragon's seed
On furrowed fields of hell.

Where the petals fold in sleep,
The war-gods came to rouse :
Stars their mailèd vigils keep ;
The gods are gone to drowse.

Milton

“What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant
and so prone to seek after knowledge. What wants there
to such a towardly and pregnant soile. . . .” (1643.)

“I should have spok’n only to trees and stones.” (1660.)

In this inconstant isle, with instant zeal
To sow eternal seeds, and from the high,
Bright apogæum, raptured to discern
The harvest-home of love and liberty,
And men as gods and angel-labourers,
Was heavenly blindness, doomed to mortal sight
In darkness, thwarted, racked between the poles
Of hell and heaven. O mighty Muse that bore
Such wounds of deadly woe, yet higher soared,
Though changed, to terror changed, with eagle wings,
Fierce with compassion dipped in agony,
O’er the reft eyry circling, hovering hung,
Heavy with thunder, shedding bolts of fire.

Coleridge

His poetry is laden fair
With influence too sweet to bear,
Whose childlike spirit bade him write,
Translating unto mortal sight,
The myst'ry of that tender might
Which fills a little child with light,
That brims and sparkles in his eyes
Like sprinkled beads of Paradise.
To Coleridge, meadow, wood, or dale
Was but a painted, thin-spun veil,
The earth a film our dim eyes cast,
Lest the Unbearable should blast.

How is the veil turned darkest night ?
How is the film grown thickest rind ?
The proud, the sensual, the blind
Have poisoned all the founts of light,
And loosed the trembling chords of air
That strung our arrowy atmosphere !

Calamity

THE people mourn. Grief's wireless signals speed
From heart to heart. O, all the world's affine ;
And in the pulsing human core, there burns
The electric spark divine !

The Great Terror

*THE seas of God are heaving
In life's uncertain bay :
The ships of God are leaving.
How fast they sail away !*

There blew a great and fiery wind :
All suddenly it came.
But had we eyes, the silent skies
Were charged with wrath and flame.

As when beside the sunny seas,
In the still mountain shade,
A careless people took their ease,
Or gain and pleasure made ;

While in the steep Vesuvian heart,
Volcanic hate undreamed
Was brewed, was pent, till all at once
Infernal rivers streamed !

So, by our pleasurable seas,
Beside our mounts of might,
We gained the world of hireling ease,
And lost our soul of sight.

*The seas of God are heaving
In life's uncertain bay :
The ships of God are leaving.
How fast they fade away !*

The Stars

How deep the holy fountains of the stars
Refresh the earth-worn wanderer ! How sweet
The ministry and comfortable light
Within the sanctuary of the stars !
In whose unfathomable silentness,
The listening spirit hears nor ear hath heard,
And sees nor eye hath seen, or imaged fair :
Swifter than thought-flash, o'er aerial seas,
Hies to his native land ; returning, bears
Prophetic memories ; and o'er the foam,
Those fragrant candles flame unquenchable,
High on the storm-girt mast-heads steady shine.
*Lift up your hearts unto the lofty stars,
Which signal from the mast-heads of the world !*

Party Politics

STRONG language seems the strength of politics,
These folk belabour so with wordy sticks :
Though Samson's strength lay in his hair, alas !
Their strength lies in the jawbone of an ass !

The War Ants

ONCE I saw in converging bands,
Ants on the war-path swarming :
I took a clod in my two hands,
And made a great disarming !
Now, would I were among the gods :
I'd break the moon and make two clods . . .

But *no !* it could not be right.
The strong gods never use might :
No, not to right the right ;
No, not to end the night
Of the war-god's Inquisition !

Biography

SOMETHING'S rotten in the soul
Of every man ; and oft-times he
Who hath done much for his countree,
Makes food for bookworms. 'Tis no curse.
Since worms in kingly oak make holes,
Those victims are no whit the worse,
If *oaken* be their souls !

History Repeats

("The expression on the face of one finely-built German officer, with a clean-cut, intellectual face and firm jaw, was that of sublime contempt. . . . His eyes and nose and the curl of his lip betokened a contemptuous regard that was curious to see in a dead man."—1915.)

THERE was a lad
Most dignified :
A way he had
(Such toppling pride !)
To cut you dead,
Or nod his head
With infinite condescension.

But was it pride ?
And was he fop ?
The way he died
On Spion Kop !
With falt'ring breath,
He bowed to death
With infinite condescension.

(Written in 1912.)

Lucifer

WE saw that rebel of the stars,
Infernal grim,
His face entrenched with thunder-scars,
Becoming him.

We thought it infinitely brave
To have dared God's rule :
We owned he was the greatest knave,
The biggest fool !

To Some War Rhymers

PEACE ! fever tongues. For all the hero dead,
We ask not vengeance on that man misled.
Peace ! wordy drums. Peace ! blood-and-thunder
rattles.
Will you, as he, invoke the God of Battles ?

Mongeham

O HAV'N of thought, by childhood's spell enchanted !
Escaped from 'prisoning moods, my spirit has
haunted

The high-banked road's ascent : the dusky ride,
The garden to a walled world magnified,
And that great summer-palace in the wall :
Now from those coloured panes the witch-lights fall,
And melt and smoulder, till a bursting gleam
Witches the waned soul back to life's young dream.

Blindness

HIS spirit sees, and oft essays to clear
The clouding film on heart and brain and sight,
The 'prisoning veil more thin than gossamere,
The phantom wall of adamantine night.

The rede is dark, and none may understand.
Chastened we are, and blest above our will :
There's surgery in heaven ; and unknown skill
Attends life's wounded. Perhaps this thwarting
band
Attached hath been by an ethereal hand.

The Atlantean

AN aura streamed about him every way,
Flowing more fragrant than the souls of flowers,
Trembling in love-light ; and his shining eyes
Mirrored the sea whereon his spirit sailed,
And cast strange influence, that other souls
Stirred in their cloudy slumber, thrilled in dream ;
But, earth-blind, turned in trance their misty sight.
The Atlantean said : *These sail with me
In the same ship, amid sublimity ;
Their eyes are holden, and their ears are stopped.*
His face was strong beyond the strength of man's,
Fairer than woman's, gentler than a child's,
Meek with compassion, mystical with power.
He might have marshalled nations, gained the
world,
Such power he had, and mast'ry to enthrall
The will, and sway as one a multitude :
Only the blind aspire to lead the blind.

His ship sailed for Atlantis of the Blest.
None saw the glory ; for her set sails flashed,
Dazzling the sun to pitchy darkness.

At Dawn

THE day dawns bright ; but not for thee—
Unless a spirit-sun arise :
The flaming pennants blaze the skies ;
But not for thee ! but not for me !

The birds sing blithe ; but not for thee—
Unless thy soul hear spirit-notes :
The merry music trills and floats ;
But not for thee ! but not for me !

The Passing of War

ENOUGH of wars ! The new age rings :
'Tis time that man left childish things.

Enough of wars, and leave to boys
To play with military toys.

Enough of wars ! Man has such foes :
Let man save man from his great woes.

Pius X

His gentle spirit dwelt afar
From this world's pomp, from this world's war.
Peacemaker, terrible and meek,
How lowly grand his shining eye !
As when the blue, ethereal sky,
Above the rolling battle-reek,
Shines clear and awful !

Aug. 23, 1914.

Heartbreak

THE winds of the spirit are frore winds,
Which rake through the bones of the air :
The ribs of those tottering castles
That stood so invincibly fair ;
Invincible still, though in ruin,
Unfallen, though racked with despair !

The winds of the spirit are salt winds,
And bitter with tang of the foam ;
Where only old, desolate shipwrecks
Fitfully and mournfully roam,
Seek a way 'mid the wandering ice-floes,
Grope blindly, eternally home !

The Dreamer

You have dreamed in your spirit a dream
Which the world says can never come true ;
And the world is much older than you.
Forget, then, this tremulous gleam
Of the dew on the flower of a dream.

Everyman

THE loads of life are heavy loads,
And long and narrow lie the roads :
And men do faint, and men do stray,
 Afar to roam.
But man goes toiling on the way
 To his long home.

The seer goes with man along :
The heavens listen to his song ;
The stars shed many a quiv'ring ray
 That lights the loam.
It is not trouble all the way
 As man goes home.

The Island

Part I

'Twas midnight in the castle hall ;
And where the solemn candles tall
Made glamour o'er the tapestry,
A sudden vision hinted me,
That in my spirit I discerned,
A strange and dreadful misery
Was on my brother fallen. He,
From voyages unknown returned
But yester-eve, anon would sail.
Lo ! by the hearth-side, brooding pale,
Bowed as an old man ; in his eyes
What woeful light ! what numb surmise !

“ Now tell me, brother, why you rove
On the uncomfortable sea,
And why your ship, in frosty cove,
With sails a-shiver drearily— ”

But he made answer slow and drear,
And spake as there were none to hear :
“ On a barren and desolate bay,
By bloody pirates was cast away

An holy man, whose spirit's light
Had dazed their gaudy suns to night.
The holy father looked to heaven
As he stood on the bleached sea-sands,
And prayed that we might be forgiven,
Lifting his frail, white hands— ”

*“ What say'st thou, brother ? Was it by thee ?
Art thou a pirate ? ” “ Yea !
And I must sail most speedily
Unto that Carib bay.
There's virtue in the sainted air,
And precious odours of holy prayer :
Well may my soul be shriven !
When the holy father's life was spent,
His winged soul pierced the firmament,
And rent the cope of heaven.”*

Part II

'Twas starry night. The lantern sea
Beyond the cove shone mistily.
The stars, that glistered o'er the mast,
The shaken stars, 'gan streaming past.
Beyond the cove, beyond the rock,
The shadowy ship was fading white ;
And suddenly the castle clock
Struck soft and clear,

As if the silver heart of night
Had shed a tear !

The ship was gone : the years lagged on ;
But never she returned.
And no word came : still in a flame
Of loneliness I burned ;
To the Carib Sea most yearningly
The eyes of my spirit turned.
And, in a vision of the night,
I saw, as through a veil of light,
A little, lone ship, deep embayed,
A shore in shining shells arrayed,
And one that kneeling prayed.

*O brother mine, our souls affine
Breathe with one breath :
Thy soul, as mine, is heavy
Unto death !*

*Brother, thou art shriven !
Thy sins are forgiven !
O sainted air !
O incense wafted hither !
Give me to fare,
Lead me, O speed me, thither !*

Part III

Long was my quest in the lone Carib Sea ;
For ever a spirit constrainèd me :
That spirit, I ween, which savèd me,
Whenas, at midnight, whilst I slept,
Into my cabin those mutineers crept,
Whose cloudy faces, o'er their grim,
Dark-gleaming blades, I saw in dream ;
And somewhat more discerned, though dim,
As 'twere a shadow great and grand,
A shadow and a shadowy hand,
Which, on a sudden, overcast
These doomed, and through their bodies passed ;
So that, with glassy eyeballs crazed,
Rigid they stood, with bare blades raised.

With bristling beard, with jaws fast locked,
Each falling body, a dreadful space,
Sagged heavy with death, and sagging rocked
Flat down upon its face !

I woke ; I rose : I nothing feared.
The ship sailed smooth ; but no man steered.
The decks as bone gleamed cold ;
But o'er the poop, in the big sail's droop,
'Twas black as black mould.

And all night long, the shadow lay
On the lofty poop, round the big lateen.
When the moon was sunk and the stars grew
grey,
On the sea astern, as an oily black tarn,
Was that prodigious shadow seen.

The moon was sunk ; the stars grew wan :
Smoothly gliding, the ship sailed on.
The many-jewelled dawnlight shone.
The dawnlight streaked o'er a shadowy land
As jewels upon a beckoning hand.

The ship sailed on—nor let nor stay,
And opened the mouth of a deep, sandy bay.
By the desolate shore, a little ship lay,
Her sail in tatters, a ruined bark.
A figure there knelt. His clothes hung dark
His face upraised. His claspèd hands
Were whiter than the bleached sea-sands !

Part IV

There fell a wonder on the sea ;
But who shall hearken unto me ?
A child's pure eyes are full of sight ;
But men are grown to hate the light :

They go into the shadowy dens,
And dim their souls with webs of sense ;
With ghostly cowl they cloak the sun :
They'd have me in derision.

There fell a wonder while I did stand
Beside the kneeling skeleton.
The sun beat brazen on the sand ;
The sea-shells in a dazzle shone.
But I stood stricken numb and old :
An icy scalpel of despair
Laid the nerves of my spirit bare.
The brazen sun sank dead and dim,
Waned to the snuff in his socket-rim.

Then, on a sudden, the bleached sea-sand,
The wreck, the kneeling skeleton,
Turned misty wan ; the spectral land
Transparently, in rhythmic, slow
Waverings, began to glow.
But o'er the sea, strange stillness fell,
And darkness, rapt with mystery
Of presences invisible ;
Whose traces in the quiv'ring gloom,
Made glint and gleam as fragrant bloom
Of colours strange, ineffable.
Then, through the phantom walls of night,
Flashed unimaginable light !

Dazzled, in ecstasy and awe,
My soul's sight failed, and, failing, saw
A glory within a glory veiled,
And That which was inscrutable. . . .

The vision passed. The benison
Endures until the night be gone,
And on the verge again I stand
Of heaven's lost, and new-found land !

The Ghost Pirate

HE has doomed the pirate that he die ;
He has doomed him with a jeer :
“ We'll launch you rolling 'gainst the sky,
To luff and tack and veer ! ”

“ Though launched against the sky I be,
My soul shall sail full low,
Sail in a ghost-ship on that sea
'Twixt earth and hell doth flow.

“ And there I'll cruise and lie in wait ;
So look to your ghost-ship well :
If she do carry devil's freight,
I'll chase her ashore on hell ! ”

They have launched him at the gallows-yard ;
He rolls 'gainst the western sky :
The setting sun was bloody and barred,
When the Justice came to spy.

And a spectral cloud sailed over the sun ;
And the sky grew dim and grey ;
And there came a sound as a phantom gun . . .
The Justice went his way !

But slow he went ; his sight grew dark,
For a stricken man was he ;
And his brain 'gan sway as a ghostly bark
That rolls on a ghostly sea.

A sail loomed grim, and a far gun hailed ;
There blew an icy breath :
And slow and foul his ghost-ship sailed
Out to the seas of death.

The Widow's Mites

THE goblin counts his yellow gold ;
His steel eyes flame in moonlight cold,
Flame and flicker and gleam and glint :
“ Every piece from the Devil's mint ! ”

The goblin gloats o'er the counted gold :
“ For this little heap a bell was tolled ;
For this, at dawn, the same merry bell
Shall ring on earth, and echo in hell ! ”

The goblin leers o'er the heaps of gold,
And lifts up as much as he can hold :
“ The crone might move the Devil's glee.
Fair and frail as a rose was she ! ”

The goblin glooms o'er the faded gold :
“ *How came these coins 'mong the others rolled ?* ”
He claps his hand to his dazzled eyes ;
While dawn comes dancing through the skies.

Prometheus Minor

THERE was a little demon dire
That loved to play with hellë fire :
He burned his fingers, scotched the cat
When cats are black, 'tis all through that !
On this, the Devil, very waxy,
Kicks him out through Cotopaxi.
So, with a shriek of fiendish mirth,
He came to plague the sons of earth :
Cupid was the name he took :
If men were wise, he'd take his hook !
He sets 'em all a-playing with fire :
They're wise below, if we're up higher !

The Miser

I sit by the hearth-side and warm my old bones.
The bitter night's wind in the chimney-flue moans :
It moans as a voice ; it would thrill me with cold.
There's fire for the heart in the glint of the gold !

The embers are glowing ; I shiver a-cold—
And how is the glitter gone out of the gold ?
And what does the wind say ? A curse on the wind !
It moans in the flue as a soul that hath sinned !

A curse on the wind ! Had it body or bone,
It should learn that I live, and will live, alone !
But it cannot get warm ! It shivers a-cold !
It cannot lay hands on one guinea of gold !

But what does it say as it whirls in the flue ?
There is no time to lose. There's plenty to do.
That's what it says, may it wither with cold !
There's much to be done with three bags full of gold.

'Tis a perishing night ; there's four foot of snow.
There's four foot of earth where a man lies below !
My cloak is in tatters. My shoes are worn thin.
'Tis better to shiver without than within !
The gold is full heavy. Though lusty and strong,—
Get you up ! Get you out ! I will shove you along.

Buccaneer Crackpot

WE had an old crackpot in our company,
The maddest old crackpot as ever I see ;
For when all the others was dicing and drinking,
Old crackpot sat thinking and thinking and thinking !

Thinking and thinking and thinking, and writing !
So we set on him once ; but much it bestead !
Though we spilled all his ink, he made good re-
quiting ;
For the ink that he dipped into after was *red* !

In the Darien woods, where the rivers run wild,
In a stoppered bamboo Crackpot carried his child
(So called he his papers), to keep 'em from harm ;
But an Indian stole it to serve for a charm.

So *that* is what comes of this thinking and thinking,
Instead of a rational dicing and drinking !
I'd rather lie dead of the gripes, or the liver,
Than perish like Crackpot of grief in a river !

Don Peralta's Galleon

(Captain Searles, one of Henry Morgan's buccaneers, carouses on the Island of Taboga, while his quarry, an easy prey, sails by "very richly laden with all the King's Plate and great quantity of riches of gold, pearl, jewels, and other most precious goods.")

THE ship that broke the pirate's heart
 Was Don Peralta's galleon :
 The brawny pirate, bold and swart,
 Was dwindled to a skeleton.

He toasted in a frothing brew
 Old Don Peralta's galleon :
 He promised all his roaring crew
 The riches of King Solomon.

Glutted with gems and deep with gold,
 Came Don Peralta's galleon :
 The dark seas whitened as she rolled ;
 She made a gasping to be gone.

And golden visions, dreams of pearls
 In Don Peralta's galleon—
 Nay, em'rald dreams, had Captain Searles,
 Stretched on the wine-floor, drowsing on.

.

He wakes, and rubs his bleary sight ;
A ghost-fleck on the sea-line shone,
A pearl that waned in spectral light—
Don Peralta's galleon !

Scatterbrain

HE goes wool-gathering 'neath the stars ;
He hath a screw loose : *Scatterbrain.*
He hath a window loose that jars
Open to heaven, and falls shut again.

Two Loves

THERE was an old sea-captain who
Loved his ship, and his bottle too.
This love and that could ne'er agree :
A cursed and crank old hulk was she
When the old man went rolling,
Rolling and rolling,
Rolling and rolling :
He did curse her heartily.

One evening, drunken in a gale,
He would not take in any sail :
“ I will not bate an inch ! ” said he.
“ No, let the ” (*mumble, mumble*) “ be ! ”
So the old ship went rolling,
Rolling and rolling,
Rolling and rolling,
To the bottom of the sea.

The Convict Pirates

BIRDS of a feather
Were caged together
Aboard the *Miranda Jane* :
With every breath
We longed for death,
Cursing the stench and the pain ;
Till fever furiously raged,
And all our jailers caught and caged
In red-hot bars that death assuaged,
Aboard the *Miranda Jane*.

Birds of a feather
Were freed together
Aboard the *Miranda Jane* :
With every breath
We thanked the death,
And steered for the Spanish Main.
We made a goodly recompense ;
And where we went, they wished us thence :
We called our ship the *Pestilence*,
And sank the *Miranda Jane*.

The Drover

(A Winter's Song.)

JOHNNY was a drover,
Singing all the day ;
But at the port of Dover,
He ran to sea away,
Singing :
Tool-er-ool-er-ay !
Tool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ay !

Johnny was a rover
(Mark well what I do say !) ;
Johnny lived in clover,
Till a round-shot bowled him over,
Singing :
Tool-er-ool-er-ay !
Tool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ay !

Now, I cannot well believe it ;
But at Dover, they do say,
That a score of country bumpkins
Were wending on their way
(The hour being after midnight,

And the moonshine bright as day),
When a phantom voice came singing :

Tool-er-ool-er-ay !

Tool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ay !

Captain Diaz don Alfonso,
Captain Sacramento Rey,
Captain el Braziliano,
As their ships off Cuba lay,
Cut their cables in a panic,
And were driven on a cay ;
For a phantom voice kept singing :

Tool-er-ool-er-ay !

Tool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ool-er-ay !

The Wood Goblins

(On Eric Ekengren's Picture.)

THE woods are veiled in mist of flame :
Dim are the ways where the goblins came.
They will take their ease : they have laid them
down ;
They have plucked the dead leaves, dank and
brown :
They will puff the smoke, till their fiery souls
Grow grey as the ash in their pipe-bowls.

Something was Come!

EVERYTHING comes, they say, to them as waits :
Something was come off Magellan's dim Straits !

Long we had waited for ships we was told
Was laded chock-full of American gold,

Whenas we looked out of a morning, we spied
A ship like to our'n ; and right close in she plied.

So we goes out in chase. When we fires off a gun,
She immediately fires off an answering one.

So the old Jolly Roger streams broad at our peak,
For to show them we wasn't at playing hide and
seek !

And then, may my body be frizzled in flame,
If what we was after don't hang out the same !

Well, we was for consorting—as what was more
right ?
But they fled us as if we was blizzard and blight !

The wind it was rising, and blows up a gale ;
But our mad captain hoists up our t'gallant sail.

Now, may I be moored in a boiling-hot dyke,
If the other don't go for to hoist up the like !

So we fires our bow-chaser. It give us a scare :
They was firing afore them at large in the air !

Well, the wind come and took us right over to sea ;
And there lay the other ship foundered like we !

We hangs on, and gets off two boats safe and sound :
Two boats from the other was rowling around !

Then we covers our eyes ; for we was much afeared :
When we looks out again, they was all disappeared !

*Some of these poems are reprinted from the
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